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ASSIMILATION OF NATIONALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES. I.

WHO and what is an American?

We are familiar enough with the question whether nationality is determined by place, blood or allegiance. We are informed that originally it was determined by blood, that is, by tribal relationship. In early history a Frank was a member of the Frankish tribe; England was Angle-land, the land of the English; the kings were kings of the people, and John was the first to assume the title *Rex Angliae*. As nations acquired fixed abodes and territorial limits corresponded with the extent of political authority, residence in a country and allegiance to a sovereign became elements in the notion of nationality. An Englishman was ordinarily a man of English blood, living in England and owing allegiance to the King of England. A foreigner might, of course, live in England and not be an Englishman, just as an Englishman might live abroad and not lose his nationality. But such cases were exceptional; in the great mass, blood, residence and allegiance united to constitute nationality.

The progress of events has gradually destroyed the simplicity and obviousness of this conception. In confederated states question might arise as to the relative prominence of the local or the central allegiance. In the days of the weakness of Germany a man might have been more conscious of the fact that he was a Prussian or a Bavarian than that he was a German. Even at the present time, while the Prussian king is German Emperor, it may be doubted whether all his immediate subjects feel that they are first Germans and then Prussians.

The establishment of colonies which were intended to be something more than mere trading-posts or factories, made a breach in the notion of residence as necessary to nationality.

An Englishman settled in America was still an Englishman by blood and allegiance, but he called himself an American on account of his residence. American, on the other hand, could mean nothing as to blood or allegiance, because there were Americans of many different nationalities and subject to different sovereigns. When the allegiance came to be thrown off, one more element in the notion of nationality was lost. The colonist was obviously no longer an Englishman, except by descent. He was an American ; American, however, denoting neither blood nor allegiance, but simply place. The Indian, who owes his ordinary appellation to an error of the geographers, was the real American. The term might be applied to a variety of persons ; it might be applied to the inhabitants of any portion of the three Americas. It is a designation without meaning as to blood, although we sometimes try to make it more definite by a qualifying prefix, expressing descent, such as Spanish-American, German-American. The term South-American is in general use with us, although, curiously enough, we do not apply the corresponding term North-American to ourselves.

In fact, the people of the United States have, in a certain sense, appropriated the title American to themselves. We, the people of the United States, think of ourselves as "the American people." Doubtless this is partly due to the impossibility of forming an adjective or a noun referring to the people as distinguished from the territory of the United States. To some extent, moreover, it may be looked upon as a justifiable usurpation by the most important independent state upon the continent of America. The term thus applied to the people of the United States includes evidently the elements of place and allegiance. As to blood, it covers four races—the White, Indian, Negro and Chinese, and a great variety of nationalities—English, French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Italian and others, among the original colonists or the later immigrants. These elements have not remained isolated, but have coalesced so as to form an apparent unity which we think of as the American people. It is true, also, that this is not

altogether a mechanical union, like that of the particles of a mosaic, which are placed side by side so as to form a unity of design, but which can be broken off and separated. There has been, as is so often said, a chemical union, of which the original elements can be determined by analysis but can never be restored. The descendants of the Englishman of Massachusetts and the Dutchman of New York are no longer separable in blood, in feeling or in mode of action. They are neither English nor Dutch, but American. In the same way, will not all the other elements which have been introduced, and which are being added at the present time, coalesce so as to form a unity which will be a real ethnical unity and constitute a real American people?

This question has often been answered in the affirmative, but with little thought as to the character of the process and the result which will be attained, or which it is desirable to attain. Many content themselves with the mere assertion that the American of the future will be a combined Englishman, Frenchman, German, Italian, — perhaps even Negro and Chinaman, — and that he will unite the good qualities of all these peoples, and thus be superior to any one of them. The exponents of this idea do not explain why the good qualities should survive and the bad disappear. Others seem to look upon American institutions as a sort of mill, into which all sorts of grain may be thrown and from which the best of flour will invariably come out. They do not consider what would happen if we run in a lot of chaff, or even a little dynamite occasionally. Such idealists pay no regard to any theories of the mixture of races, either biological, sociological or historical; but the real question of interest is in regard to the process by which such mixture is brought about and the character of the product which is formed.

The optimistic view that the mere mixture of races and peoples will of itself produce a superior type has no scientific basis in anthropology and ethnology. In the first place, because the anthropologists have as yet reached no satisfactory definition of race, tribe or people. They are not yet agreed

whether man constitutes one species or several species, or as to the number and characteristic marks of the races of man. There are numerous mixed races ; but as to whether these tend to perpetuate themselves, or to be lost by inter-crossing, or to return to the parent type, the anthropologists are uncertain. The sub-divisions of races, such as tribes, families, stocks and peoples, are equally difficult to define. We use the term race sometimes to cover them all, as we speak equally of the Caucasian race and the Irish or the Anglo-Saxon race. Anthropologists differ as to the physical characteristics which are to be employed to distinguish race. Sometimes it is color of skin, sometimes quality of hair, sometimes shape of the skull ; but none of these has proved entirely satisfactory. With such uncertainty in the use of terms, it is impossible to predicate anything of the "mixture of races."

In the second place, anthropologists are uncertain as to the physical effect of the crossing of races. If races are true "species," then by biological analogy half-breeds should be hybrids, that is, sterile or of a low degree of fertility. Much labor has been unsuccessfully expended in the effort to prove that such is the case. It cannot be shown that crossing even between such extremes as the whites and the Africans is infertile. It can, however, be affirmed with some plausibility that such crossing is almost always reinforced by renewed crossing with the parent stock ; so that we cannot say with certainty that such half-breeds, if left to themselves, would be perpetuated. This very doubt shows how absurd the affirmation is that mixture of races in itself results in a superior race. Even where we cannot deny the fertility of the crossing, the half-breeds seem to tend towards the condition of the inferior parent. They have nowhere in the world produced a high civilization. The experience of the United States confirms this view. Neither the Indian half-breed nor the mulatto has approached the white parent.

It may be said, however, that by the mixture of races we do not mean these extreme cases where physical differences offer such obstacles to successful crossing, but the mixture of

different stocks of the same great family, as the Germanic and Keltic stocks of Europe. Here we have a mixture of peoples who are distinguished not by color or marked physical differences, but by social organization and character. Sociology has a theory for these cases, but it does not support the optimistic view that such mixture is invariably good. Spencer says that where the elements are very unlike, there results an unstable equilibrium, although small differences seem favorable, by allowing room for modifications necessary to social progress. But from this theory it is merely begging the question to conclude that the mixture of Irish and French-Canadians with the old stock of New England will produce a high civilization. Are the elements sufficiently alike to unite in the main points while allowing room for heterogeneity in minor points? That is the thing to be proven.

Driven from the anthropological and the sociological theories, the optimists have recourse to what may be called the "historical" theory of the mixture of nationalities. They say that as a matter of history all the great civilized nations are composed of a variety of elements which, if not distinct races and peoples, are at least distinct nationalities. They point to the English, composed of the Anglo-Saxons, the Danes and the Normans. They point to the invigorating effect of even a slight mixture of Norman blood, which was of the same race and stock as the Anglo-Saxon and Danish, upon the history of England. Here, too, it is not so much the mixture of blood, as the effect upon institutions and national character, that is of consequence and that is favorable to social progress. The Normans were not numerous enough to effect much by inter-marriage; but by their capacity for administration, by the introduction of the French language, by their international relations, they affected profoundly the development of England.

But this historical argument, again, is quite fallacious. Not all mixtures of nationalities of which history gives us an account have resulted in social progress. Few territories have seen a greater variety of nationalities than Sicily, one of the most unhappy countries in the world. Everything depends upon

the way in which the mixture is brought about and the elements which are involved. A conquering nationality may bring its civilization to an inferior people, and good may result. Or the conqueror, superior in brute force but inferior in culture, may adopt the civilization of the conquered, and advance be made in that way. Or the antipathy between the conqueror and the conquered may be so bitter that no approach is possible, and the result is constant disunion, distraction and weakness. Before we can affirm that a mixture of nationalities will prove fruitful, it is necessary to examine the character of the process and the nature of the elements which it is proposed to unite.

It is my purpose in this and the following article to make some observations in regard to the character of the process of mixture of nationalities which is going on in the United States. By mixture I do not mean necessarily an actual mixture of blood, but an assimilation of institutions, character and customs by which these different elements shall gradually be fused into one nationality, or one body — the American people.

It is evident that the accomplishment or failure of this fusion will depend upon the strength of the particularistic forces associated with, or latent in, each nationality, as compared with the strength of the assimilating forces to which they are all subjected and which tend to reduce them all to one type. Any one familiar with the history of the United States is aware that these assimilating forces are very real and very powerful, and that in thousands of cases they have overcome the strongest national peculiarities and habits. This greatly simplifies our study. On the face of it the problem is one of convergence and not of divergence. We can devote ourselves to a study of the forces tending to assimilate, leaving the opposing forces to be treated as opposing forces, indeed, but of minor importance. We may assume for the purposes of the argument, at least, that a nationality is being formed in the United States, and may consider the forces which are propitious and the chance these have of making themselves felt.

There are, now, three great forces which tend to assimilate men of different races or nationalities living in the same

territory and under the same government. These are inter-marriage, physical environment and social environment. The first is, of course, a powerful assimilating force: but it either shatters upon social prejudice, as in the case of the union of blacks and whites, so that the result is retrogression rather than advance; or it is difficult to trace, owing to the lack of statistics, as in the case of the whites of different nationalities in the United States. It will, therefore, be omitted here, and we shall confine our attention to the last two.

Influence of Physical Environment.

Before going on to the direct effect of physical environment, there are one or two peculiarities about the process of assimilation of nationalities in the United States which deserve to be noted. They affect both of the forces mentioned above.

It must be confessed that the mixture of races and nationalities in the United States has differed in one important respect from those which have taken place previously in history. In former times the process has almost always taken on the form of conquest. The conquerors have occupied the superior position, and have had the opportunity to impose their institutions, or at least the form of them, upon the conquered. Often the conquered have been reduced to the condition of slaves or serfs, and have not been able to oppose the process of amalgamation except through the power of passive resistance and the force of numbers. In the United States the mixture has been a peaceful process. The colonies were settled by different nationalities, but all these colonies came into the Union on an equal footing. Since that time immigration has brought representatives of all nations, but they have all been treated alike and as on the same level with the original settlers. There has been no war of races or nationalities. There has been no subjection of one nationality to another. Each has had an equal chance to make good its own position and to influence national development. There has been no compulsory amalgamation, no imposition of the institutions of one

nationality upon the others, no forced union of blood. The one great exception to this has been in the case of the negro, who has suffered all these things through the institution of slavery, and the consequence is that we have the unique negro problem. But among the whites there has been practically no distinction of nationality or blood or social condition.

The importance of this lies in the fact that thereby all three of the assimilating forces mentioned above have had free chance to work. In former times this was not so. Where the one nationality felt obliged to keep itself apart as a sort of military garrison, it was able to resist for generations even the pervasive influence of climate and physical environment. It did this by keeping up strict military discipline, and by refusing to adopt the manner of life, the occupations and the amusements which were suited to the climate, and which would have gradually moulded the conquering people to the same type as the indigenous inhabitants. We have such examples in oriental countries, where conquerors from the north have long maintained their superiority by keeping themselves separated and under strict discipline. Sooner or later the climate makes itself felt, but the process of assimilation is long delayed. In the United States the physical environment has had free chance to exert its influence. There has been no reason why men should resist it for the purpose of maintaining their dominant or distinct position. On the contrary, adaptation has been the surest and quickest way of reaching influence and power. The desire to retain old habits out of allegiance to the mother country has been absent, because such allegiance even in the form of colonial dependence has been lacking. Many of the immigrants have, indeed, made haste to drop costumes, customs and habits of life which reminded them of servile conditions at home or were badges here of their foreign birth. It is astonishing how quickly after their arrival here the peasants of Europe abandon their picturesque habiliments. They adapt themselves to the climate and to the occupations and habits of life suited to the climate. Physical environment becomes thus a powerful assimilating influence, tending to

reduce men of all nationalities to one type, and that the one already prevailing.

It is scarcely necessary to add that peaceful settlement is most favorable to the working of the other force, namely, social environment. Men will not adopt the institutions or habits of life of their enemies or rivals if they can help it. We have numerous examples in history of small fractions of populations preserving their social peculiarities because of their traditional relations of hostility to the ruling majority. Such has not been the case in the United States. No nationality has felt itself obliged to maintain its national customs in defiance of the rest of the community, and as an indication of its independence. We have had no irreconcilable fractions, simply because no one has attempted to coerce any fraction. One cannot long maintain an attitude of defiance where no person threatens. Religious and other leaders have sometimes attempted to keep up a certain amount of isolation among particular bodies of immigrants by maintaining the foreign language and habits of life ; but even when such attempts are successful for awhile, they generally fail with the second or third generation, which yields to the dissolving influence of social environment.

A second remark may be made in this connection which is of similar import. This is the fact that the coming of nationalities to the United States has been in the form not of organized bodies of men but of isolated individuals. This was true even in the days of colonization. It is still more true of immigration. If the millions of Germans who have come to this country had come in a body, or even if they had come successively, but in organized form and directed by a state power, they would have formed a compact and homogeneous body which would with difficulty have yielded to any assimilating force. The same number of individuals scattered through the community lose the resisting power which association with their countrymen gives. Owing to lack of organization they succumb to the influence of physical and social environment. It is this fact that makes the question of

immigration different from that of conquest and of colonization and renders the process of race mixture different in the United States from any preceding historical example. There is another aspect of this question, namely, whether a mass of individuals thus left free to themselves, and not subject to the restraining and directive force of tradition and social ideals, can or will develop any great social power or form a good basis for any system of social ethics ; but this does not concern us here. For the moment we are concerned only with the chance which the assimilating forces have of making their influence felt, and we can see that in the case of immigration the chance is a very good one.

From the above considerations we should expect that physical environment would have an assimilating effect on the different nationalities brought under its influence in the United States. We have now to expose the elements to be assimilated, to define what we mean by physical environment, and to explain the method of measuring the effect of the assimilating process.

The population of the United States in 1890 consisted of the following elements :

Total Population	62,622,250	100.00%
Colored	7,638,360	12.21%
Native whites of native parentage	34,358,348	54.87%
Native whites of foreign parentage	11,503,675	18.37%
Foreign whites	9,121,867	14.56%
Total of last two	20,625,542	32.93%

We have here elements of great importance in the constitution of the population and differing widely from one another. In no other country in the world do we find such peculiar elements existing side by side and giving rise to such questions of ethnology and sociology. Here we have bodies of men differing in race, in birth-place, in parentage, in social condition, in political traditions, in ethical consciousness, — all brought under the influence of the same physical environment and political and social constitution. In this great ethnical and sociological conglomeration, what basis have we for social peace and harmonious social progress? No nation

has ever faced such a problem before, or, at least,—if we involuntarily think of the Roman Empire,—no nation has ever sought to solve it by means of peaceful development under the régime of liberty.

From whatever point of view we look at them, these elements have very different significance. The first, the colored, I do not propose to treat of here. The effect of physical environment is peculiar, inasmuch as race seems to fit them for those portions of the South which are less favorable to the whites. Slavery and climate, while concentrating the negroes in the South, have had a complementary effect in directing white immigration to the North, and this has had an important influence on the political and social history of the United States. The blacks have been subjected to the influence of social environment, but rather in the way of an inferior race which has had institutions thrust upon it without any action of its own, and with only a limited capacity for appropriating them. On the other hand, they are native-born Americans and the only civilization they know is American civilization. Hence they are not so much an alien as a peculiar element, separated from the rest of the community by an ineradicable mark, and yet inseparably bound to the community. With the mark of slavery still upon them, with popular prejudice arrayed for the most part against them, with the conflicting opinions as to their capacity for intellectual development, and with the uncertainty as to the effect of liberty upon their energy and morality, it is impossible to predict how and when the negroes are to be assimilated to the white population of the United States.

The negro is native born. There are two other native-born elements. These are the native-born of native parentage and the native-born of foreign parentage. The first is the most important element in our population both as to number and quality. They constitute 54.8 per cent of the total population. They are what we call the American element proper. We think of them as descendants of the original colonists, or at least of those who helped to establish the American common-

wealths and to give an impress to American institutions. We think of them as far enough away from their European origin to be uninfluenced by former traditions, and to be the unconscious or conscious bearers of whatever is peculiar to American life. This, of course, is not altogether true. We can trace the distinction of place of birth back only two generations. Among these persons of native birth and native parentage there are many grandchildren of immigrants, and there are some who are still imperfectly adjusted to American life. But on the whole it is a homogeneous body, and to this body the others of more recent arrival tend to be assimilated, if to any. It includes the true Americans, so far as that term can be defined statistically.

Next to these are the native-born of foreign parents. These are the second generation of the immigrants, so to speak. They are foreigners by extraction, but they are American by birth. They form an important element, over eighteen per cent of the total population, and more important still they stand half-way, as it were, between the native and the foreign element. They are not the descendants of the colonists, nor do their American traditions run as far back as those of the previous class. On the other hand, they are not actually foreigners, nor are they fresh from the influences of the old world. Many of them are as completely American in their sentiments and allegiance as any descendant of the Puritans. They represent the process of assimilation in the act, as it were, and form a most interesting subject of study. For if by any means we can measure their social characteristics and character, we have some indication of the rapidity and completeness of the process itself.

The last element is the whites of foreign birth, the immigrants. This is the real element to be assimilated. They constitute 14.5 per cent of the whole. Upon their number and quality depends the difficulty of the process. It is in them that we seek indications of tendencies and characteristics which may offer obstacles to the harmonious development of our institutions and social life. This is the foreign element

proper, constantly recruited by immigration and constantly diminished by deaths and emigration. It is the renewal of this element by immigration that gives to the problem its importance by making new demands upon the forces of assimilation. This last element is not by any means homogeneous. There are members of this class who came here in childhood, and who nearly approach those who were born here of foreign parentage. There are some who are at once absorbed into the current of American life and who scarcely remember that they are foreign-born. But statistically this is our nearest approach to a measurement of the foreign element, and it can be treated as such.

There are two ways of manipulating these last figures which give us rather interesting measurements of the intensity and character of the foreign influence, so far as it can be done statistically. One is to combine the foreign-born and the native-born of foreign parentage. That gives us a total of 20,625,542, or 32.9 per cent of the total population of the United States, who either by birth or by parentage are foreigners. This may be said to represent the total foreign influence, the foreigners of two generations, and may be contrasted statistically with the native-born of native parentage, who represent the true American element. This figure is of importance, sometimes, for it shows how in certain localities almost the entire population is foreign in this sense. In the North Atlantic division, for instance, the two elements together constitute 47.3 per cent of the total population. In the Northwest they constitute 43.2 per cent. In some of the states the proportion is still greater. In Massachusetts it is 56.2 per cent, and in Rhode Island 57.9 per cent. The largest proportion is found in cities. For instance, in the city of New York those of foreign birth and of foreign parentage are 82.3 per cent of the total population. In Milwaukee the two foreign elements form 85 per cent of the total, and in one of the rural counties of Wisconsin 90 per cent of the population are of foreign birth or of foreign parentage. In such communities the power to resist assimilation would seem to be at its maximum.

The second manipulation consists in contrasting the foreign-born with the native-born of foreign parentage. These latter are the immigrants of the second generation. They are not to be looked upon as wholly foreign, for they have been subjected to the influence of American life. It is evident that the relative proportion of these two elements is of considerable importance in measuring the task of assimilation. For if a considerable proportion of the whole foreign element consists of this second generation, then the task of assimilation is partly in the way of accomplishment; while if the whole or a large proportion consists of newly arrived immigrants, then the work is just begun. It is interesting to notice that for the whole of the United States the second generation already exceeds the first; for the native-born of foreign parentage constitute 18.3 per cent of the whole population, while the foreign-born constitute only 14.5 per cent. One curious thing is that, while in the Eastern states, such as Massachusetts and Rhode Island, the first generation still outnumbers the second, in some of the Western states which we think of as peculiarly the home of the immigrant, the second generation outnumbers the first. The following are specimen percentages:

	FOREIGN- BORN.	NATIVES OF FOREIGN PARENTAGE.
Massachusetts	29.19	27.09
Rhode Island	30.69	27.29
Wisconsin	30.77	43.09
Minnesota	35.87	39.80

These figures indicate the recent immigration into the Eastern states, and indicate just as clearly the greater task which the Eastern states have before them in assimilating the foreign-born. Many interesting contrasts of this sort are shown in different parts of the country.

Such being the elements with which we have to deal, how shall we conceive of the physical environment which we have named as one of the assimilating forces?

The most powerful influence of this sort is, to my mind, what may be termed the "frontier life," which has been the

peculiar factor in the development of this country. From the beginning the settlers have been obliged to carry on a persistent struggle with nature and with savage foes. The colonists were left almost entirely to their own resources in this great struggle. They developed a spirit of self-reliance, a capacity for self-government, which are the most prominent characteristics of the American people. This frontier life has continued on the plains and in the mining camps of the great West down almost to the present time. Many of the immigrants have been subjected to this influence with precisely the same results as were felt by the original colonists. Even where the frontier was pushed westward, and the contest with Indian and wild beast ceased, the struggle with nature remained. There were forests to be cleared, virgin soil to be cultivated, roads to be built and all the appliances of civilization to be introduced. The immigrant became a pioneer of civilization wherever he settled. And he was obliged to carry on the work under American conditions, namely, the paucity of labor, the use of machinery, the lack of capital and use of credit, the introduction of methods best adapted to the task, and the whole under the stress of keen and active competition. The immigrant was forced to abandon the traditions of the old world and to do his share in inventing new devices. These conditions were universal, and constituted a most powerful force, tending to assimilate all comers to the type which had been found by experience to be most fitted for the problem in hand, namely, the conquest of a continent.

It is this struggle to attain the material resources of life, so often alleged as an excuse for the slow development of literature and art and the refinements of life among us, which has been the great secret of the ability to assimilate foreign elements. This struggle was felt by all classes, while the intellectual and artistic influences would have been felt, perhaps, by only a few. It was the primary condition of living which was forced upon all, and to which all were obliged to conform. The hardships of frontier life, the rough discipline of the mining camp, the stress of competition, may have had their

share in eliminating those who were too weak or too unadaptive to find a place in the organization, but this only aided the process. The physical environment was unyielding, and claimed its right of all comers. The new continent was to be settled, but it imposed its own conditions, which could not be evaded, and the more pliant element, man, was forced to conform and to fit into the conditions of living.

It may be remarked, in passing, that this assimilating force, which has so powerfully influenced our past history, tends to become less prominent with the settling up of the country. The frontier life is largely a thing of the past. The best land has been taken up. The conditions of living over a great portion of the country are similar to those of Europe. A larger and larger proportion of the population live in towns and cities where these primitive influences are not felt. In this respect each succeeding generation of immigrants escapes more and more the immersion into the chilly but bracing waters of a social life where each man counted for what he was worth. It was in many respects a cruel test, yet the opportunities were great, and the reward for the survivors correspondingly great. The assimilating power of the outward life was something tremendous, for it developed a character as the basis for social progress in comparison with which differences of nationality and past tradition were trifling. Now the immigrants find here men of their own race, organizations of labor, people speaking their own tongue, newspapers in their own language; in many directions they find support and comfort and aid. They sink into positions already opened for them, and they find an environment suited to their previous habits; but it may be doubted if the outcome is as good for them or for the country as the struggle under the old conditions. In this respect the physical environment, as an assimilating power, is a diminishing force.

When we come to inquire into the details of the influence of physical environment upon the different nationalities which have settled in the United States, we are met with difficulties of exact analysis. Under physical environment we include the

influence of climate, of geographical position, of fauna and flora, of mineral resources, of commercial position, of the character of the soil, *etc.* But these factors are so numerous and various in the United States that it is impossible to trace their direct effect. Only in one respect are our statistics suggestive, namely, that if we take the distribution of the foreign-born in respect to these things, we shall find that it corresponds closely to that of the majority of the native-born whites. Slavery was the historic reason that immigration directed itself to the Northern states rather than to the South. The climate, also, has corresponded more closely to that of the countries from which the majority of the immigrants came. Hence, we find the foreign-born distributed through the Northern states and thus subjected to the same influence of climate and geographical surroundings as the native-born whites. This comparison may be carried out in many directions. If we take altitude above the sea, we find that the largest proportion of the whites live at an altitude of between 500 and 1000 feet, and the proportion for the foreign-born is almost the same. If we take temperature, we find that a majority of the whites live in a mean annual temperature of between fifty and fifty-five degrees, and the foreign-born are found there also. So in the same way in the distribution according to topographical features, by drainage basins, by rainfall, according to humidity, we find the same correspondences. The importance of these facts is perhaps not very great. They only show that whatever may be the assimilating power of physical environment, the foreign-born are subjected to the same influences as the native whites.

The most difficult task is to find some measurement of the exact effect of physical environment upon man. Here we have to consider first of all the direct effect of climate, *etc.*, upon the physical constitution of the individual man. There is no doubt that such an influence does exist. In regard to America some very extreme views have been announced. Some authors contend that the peculiarities of the American climate are such that it is producing a race very different from any in

Europe.¹ And some go so far as to assert that climate will in time approximate all the inhabitants of North America, both white and black, to the type of the American Indian. They see already in the loss of color, the lengthened extremities, the sunken temples and the narrowed pelvis of the Yankees the beginning of this process. This is probably an extreme view; for the effect of physical environment is much less upon civilized man than upon the savage. But there is little doubt that climate develops in America diseases and nervous disorders, a restless energy and other physical and mental traits in which the foreign-born also participate. Medical statistics may some day give us fuller information upon this subject. In the same line would be statistics of births and deaths among the foreign-born and their descendants, in order to see if continued residence here made the rates approximate to those of the native-born. The assimilating force should, so far as we can see, make itself felt upon all nationalities; for they are all subject to the same influence and there is no reason why they should resist it.

Physical environment determines the economic activity of man. I have just spoken of the effect of the process of settlement upon all comers. The foreign-born participate in these varied economic activities. They are represented in mining and mechanical industries much more heavily than in agriculture. They are also numerous in domestic service and in the business of transportation. But it is in manufacturing that the characteristics of American industrial life — the use of machinery, the call upon the inventive powers, the discipline of perfect organization under the employer, the opportunity also for self-assertion in trades' unions — are especially present. Domestic service brings the foreign female under the influence of American family life. We doubtless have here an assimilating influence of economic environment, determined largely by physical conditions, which tends to reduce the foreign workman to the habits of life and work of the American laboring man.

¹ Quatrefages, *The Human Species*, p. 254.

Physical environment influences the social activity of man. Climate determines occupations and the particular methods for carrying them on. It favors an outdoor or an indoor life, it determines the amusements, the opportunities for social intercourse. In all these respects the foreign-born would yield to the environment. Their concentration in large cities also, which is so marked a feature, the quick communication by railroads, the American tendency to change of domicile, — all these would prevent any isolation and overcome any lingering tendency to retain the habits of the old world.

It is easy to point out in this way that American life gives an opportunity for the physical environment to exert its assimilating influence upon all the immigrants of whatever nationality. It is not easy to see how they can escape it. That they do not escape it, we have negative evidence. This is as follows: In many districts and even in some states a great majority of the population is of foreign birth or parentage. If it were not for the assimilating influence of physical environment, would not these communities present some of the marked features of the world whence they came? Or at least would they not differ in some marked degree from other communities which are composed almost entirely of the native-born? But where do we find the peasant of Europe perpetuating his type beyond the first generation? Where do we find artisans carrying on their work by the primitive methods which still survive in so many parts of Europe? The negative proof is irresistible.

RICHMOND MAYO-SMITH.